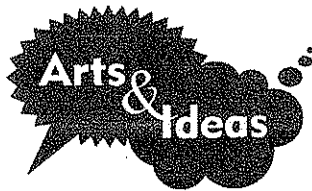


International
Festival of



My name is Elizabeth Fisher, and I'm the Managing Director of the International Festival of Arts & Ideas. *On behalf of our board of directors and executive director Mary Lou Aleskie who is a guest speaker tonight on behalf of another new haven colleague organization, LEAP and could not be with us,*

I am here tonight with a message of gratitude, and an encouraging update on the continuing effects of money well spent.

First, even in these difficult economic times, the Festival continues attract 100,000 visitors over 15 days and to return \$20 in Economic Impact for each \$1 investment of public funding.

In 2010, an independent study by Quinnipiac University, one if this nation's most respected polling institutions, calculated the Festival's economic impact at over \$14 Million. *Noteworthy to mention is the simple fact that in previous years when the annual state investment was \$1M the festival returned \$20 million of economic activity to our State.*

The Festival is attracting international investments from foreign ministries of culture seeking opportunities to showcase their artists and cultures in the US. The state's consistent partnership has given us a strong platform to build on and broaden our network of support to include sponsorships from around the world making our economic impact about new dollars rather than just a churn of existing local support. Most recently we are in a partnership with the Irish Ministry of Culture who is spending \$5.2M to bring 1000 Irish artists to the US over the coming year. The Festival is proud to be the hub for this effort in CT.

The Festival continues to provide employment, and to generate jobs in related industries.

In addition to a year-round staff of 12, last year the Festival employed a seasonal staff of 130 people, ranging from entry level, first-time workers to highly skilled professional technicians. *In this reduced budget cycle, our staffing as reduced by 20% but still provides significant employment opportunities to our citizens.*

The Festival also engages and pays a wide range of Connecticut artists. Fully one-third of all performers presented at the 2010 Festival live in the State of Connecticut.

The Festival is also indirectly responsible for the continued employment of Connecticut residents across a broad spectrum of industries, from equipment rental to hospitality services. These people and industries have come to depend on us as a revenue-generator, and with your help we have been able to remain a driving force in the regional economy.

The Festival's educational, training, and Fellowship programs remain strong and enduring threads in the fabric of our regional community. You've heard (or will hear) from some of our youth participants this evening, and their testimony speaks volumes about the value of your commitment to the unique and important programs that moved them to speak to you tonight.

The Festival's rising star as a national and international force in the performing arts world has made us a significant promoter of Connecticut tourism. Roughly 10,000 visitors from outside the state of Connecticut attend Festival events each year, creating both a significant cash investment in the local economy, and a corpus of word-of-mouth ambassadors for all that Connecticut has to offer.

And last, but certainly not least, our 16 year public-private partnership has enabled us to keep the vast majority of Festival programs free, and open to the public. To be able to make these cultural opportunities available to all is an incalculable gift to the citizens of Connecticut.

The Festival is grateful for the leadership of Governor Malloy and to the Appropriations Committee and its chairs for your ongoing support.